Harris County Archives
Houston, Texas

Oral History Collection

#1

An Interview with Thomas Anderson

Place of interview: Houston, Texas

Interviewer: Sarah Canby Jackson

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Approved: Thomas D Anderson
(Signature)

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Tape 1 Side A

SARAH CANBY JACKSON: This is Sarah Canby Jackson interviewing Thomas Anderson for the Harris County Archives Oral History Program. The interview is taking place on August 24, 2004, in Houston, Texas. I am interviewing Mr. Anderson in order to obtain his recollections concerning the Harris County Courthouse, the Anderson Clayton Building and Will Clayton. Also present during the interview is Al Davis, Chairman of the Harris County Historical Commission.

Two buildings now owned by Harris County have significant historical pasts in Houston and in Harris County history – the 1910 Courthouse (or the Civil Courts Building) and the Anderson Clayton Building. The courthouse underwent extensive renovation in the early 1950s. We are particularly interested in your recollections of the building during the 1930s and 1940s prior to this renovation.

Before we start talking about the courthouse, however, I would like to ask you a few questions about your background and education. Could you please state your full name?

THOMAS ANDERSON: My name is Thomas Dunaway Anderson and I was born in Oklahoma City, March 9, 1912. I guess the reason I'm being interviewed is because that is 92 years, anyway you look at it. I was reared in two homes in Oklahoma City and finished high school there. Then because my father had died

and my mother's relatives were mostly in Houston, no longer in Oklahoma City, we moved to Houston in 1928, and she built a new house over on South Boulevard. I was number five in a family of six boys, two of whom had been born in Tennessee, and the rest of us were born in Oklahoma City. I was the last one to finish high school there. All of us had gone to old Central High School in Oklahoma City before coming to Houston. My father had been the senior partner of Anderson Clayton and Company, which was established in Oklahoma City, he never moved to Houston. I had five brothers, three of whom spent their entire business lives with Anderson Clayton and Company in Houston and elsewhere, really all over the world – Liverpool, Le Havre, Paris, Milan, many other places as well as places in the United States – Houston and Muskogee, Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, of course, Little Rock, Memphis, Mobile, New Orleans – I'm sure the list could go on.

JACKSON: When you moved down here, how did you continue your education? I believe you went to Rice for college?

ANDERSON: I did, but when I first moved here, I had just finished high school, I was sixteen years old and my mother thought I was too young to go to college. So, she arranged for me to go to prep school, presumably preparing for the University of Virginia. And, she selected to this end, Woodberry Forest School, near Orange, Virginia, and I spent a year up there repeating the courses that I had had in high school as a senior. I really could have taught one or two of the courses. I didn't quite finish the year because she was building a new house and wanted me to come down and help. I didn't need the credits anyway to get into college, so I

withdrew about April of the school year, returned to Houston and helped her to move into the new house.

Come the fall of that year, which would be 1929, I decided that I really preferred Washington and Lee University to the University of Virginia for a variety of reasons. So, I submitted my high school diploma and a check for $125 and enrolled as a freshman in Washington and Lee in the fall of 1929. After one year my mother thought she needed me back in Houston. So, I returned to Houston and spent one year at Rice taking some of the same courses that I had had at Washington and Lee, particularly Freshman Math. Because Dr. Lovett, the president of Rice, required everybody to take a Freshman Math course of his design, this kept me from having the proper number of credits to get into the junior year back at Washington and Lee. That had a lot to do with why I went to law school up there; they would accept students who had two years of college work and had a satisfactory grade average of B or above. And that's what got me in, and it had a lot to do, as I say, with the beginning of a law career.

JACKSON: So you went to law school at Washington and Lee?

ANDERSON: Yes I did.

JACKSON: And then you came back to Texas to practice?

ANDERSON: I graduated from Washington and Lee in 1934, returned to Houston and began looking for a job. One of the men at Anderson Clayton and Company whom I knew quite well, was named Waller T. Burns, and his brother, Richard Burns, was a member of the firm then called Andrews, Kelley, Kurth and Campbell. Also, my cousin, Ellen Clayton, had married St. John Garwood, and

he was with the same firm; he had just started there. Between them, if they were willing to give me a spot, it was not hard to persuade me to accept it at $100 per month. The head of the firm was Frank Andrews, who incidentally had been head of the commission that designed and built the Harris County Courthouse on the old courthouse square. It was not the first courthouse on that square, but they kept outgrowing the old ones. I think it was completed about 1910. The date I'm sure is well recorded somewhere. Mr. Andrews had done that. He was a senior, highly regarded lawyer in Houston. His name is still in Andrews and Kurth, now a very large firm. I enjoyed my years with that firm very much.

One of things that young lawyers do, of course, is go to the courthouse. "Gophers," I suppose we would be called – go down there to file papers or to pick up papers or to find out about court settings or things of that sort. And, pretty soon I was helping Burns or Garwood try cases there and I came to know all the District Judges and their clerks pretty well. The senior District Judge was named Charles Ashe, and the others were named Ewing Boyd, Ben Wilson, Roy Campbell and Allen Hannay. Allen Hannay later became a federal judge and stayed on that bench for many, many years until his retirement.

JACKSON: What kind of law did the firm practice?

ANDERSON: General kind of law. We all had a little bit of office practice like writing wills and deeds and trust instruments and things of that sort. But, everybody was required to have a courthouse docket so he would feel at home in a courthouse. It's an old saying that a good lawyer is a good prophet. And you're not a good prophet as a lawyer unless you know what a courtroom and a judge would do to

you if you went down there with this set of facts. So, we all had experience in that – courtroom experience, as well as office experience.

JACKSON: As a young lawyer, then, were you required to go down and just observe trials?

ANDERSON: In effect I was carrying books, for the senior lawyers, and then I got to where I could try cases by myself. They just start you out in the justice of the peace court. The old judge down there was Judge Ray, and I think Judge Maes had the courtroom next door. The limit of their jurisdiction was two hundred dollars, so I couldn't get anybody hurt very bad should I make a mistake. And then the next step up in the court system was the County Court at Law, which had jurisdiction in cases from two hundred up to one thousand dollars. The County Court at Law judge I knew best was Judge Phil Woodruff, and I tried a number of cases in his court – a very competent, very fine man. All the judges were fine men and good lawyers, different personalities, but industrious, conscientious.

JACKSON: So the time period we are talking about is probably from the mid-1930s, about 1935, forward to

ANDERSON: 1935 to World War II, and then I went away to the Navy.

JACKSON: What I would like to do first when we are talking about the courthouse itself, is go through the physical description. We have WPA diagrams. These were done as a part of the Historic Records Survey in 1939, and their purpose was to do architectural drawings of the courthouses and show how all the rooms in the courthouses were used. We are lucky that these still exist. Now, when we look at

the very first page, you were talking earlier about why it is different from entering the courthouse today, primarily, that you didn't enter on the ground floor.

ANDERSON: We did not enter on the ground floor. The main entrance faced on Fannin; I guess that's still the front of the courthouse. There was a flight of granite, hard brown granite steps that led up to the second level. I never did know what was down in the lower level, the basement, the ground level which was really I think a little below ground at that time. I don't believe the floor there was as high as the ground outside. In any case, we went up those steps and entered a lobby where the county clerk's office was on the right and I believe the county tax assessor, collector was on the left. And straight ahead would be the center, below the rotunda, or maybe that itself is the rotunda and as I mentioned before the principle object there was a model ship, a freighter, twelve or fifteen feet long.

(telephone call)

You went through the county clerk's office and you got to a room that had steel doors and thick concrete walls and in there was a stand up table at which place deputy county clerks were transcribing by hand the substance of typewritten deeds. The method of duplication was still at that stage in the middle 1930s. These men wrote wonderful hands, as far as I know they never got any words wrong and they gabbled like geese the whole time that they were writing. Perfectly amazing, they could work and talk at the same time and did.

AL DAVIS: It was all men?

ANDERSON: All men, no women and they were transcribing in great big deed records that when unfolded maybe four feet end to end and be big thick things. Good

paper. They still had, right there if you wanted to pull them out, some of the deeds and grants written in Spanish from the early days. Spanish grants. They weren't Spanish grants, Mexican grants, states of Coahuila and Texas.

JACKSON: When you were talking earlier about this giant, large ship that was in the rotunda, was it right in the middle or to the side?

ANDERSON: Right square in the middle. If you dropped a plumb line from the dome center of the dome, it would have bombed that ship.

JACKSON: You don't remember who made it or why it was there?

ANDERSON: I don't remember what the name of the ship was or anything. It was all on there at that time. It was a very interesting piece, a very valuable piece that somebody must have had over there on loan. I doubt if the county owned it. I don't know who was the owner, but when they remodeled it, that thing disappeared.

JACKSON: If you were in the rotunda and you looked straight up, what would you see?

ANDERSON: You would see the ranks of stairs rising up one above the other. I'm sure you saw daylight and I suppose the underside of a dome, but I'm not certain of that because there had been a lot of alterations by the time I knew about it in the upper floor and they may have floored that over in some way. I'm very uncertain about that. I do remember the marble stairs. I could go up at least two flights of stairs if I were so disposed, but there were a couple of elevators as well, with elevator operators. I remember what one of them looked like. I never did know her name.

JACKSON: When we go up to the second floor, then we have the courtrooms. You were saying that as a young lawyer, you needed to be in those courtrooms.

ANDERSON: Well, of course we went into all of the courtrooms. Every judge had a clerk and that was usually something to talk to the clerk about as well as just manipulating papers. The principle courtroom on the second floor was the largest courtroom that I had any contact with and I had heard that in the early years it was the one that they used for criminal trials. Prior to the time that the limestone building was built across the bayou right where the police station is now. Just about in the police station parking lot, it was there for years, built in the middle twenties, perhaps. At that time criminal trials were moved over there where there were two district courtrooms allocated exclusively for criminal cases. So, this was a civil court and I think the whole time I was in the practice of law it was occupied by Judge Allen Hannay who I mentioned a little bit earlier. I do not remember any other courtroom on that floor, unless, possibly, a County Court at Law. The four other district courts, there were five all told, five civil courts all told, were on the fourth floor along with the District Clerk's office.

JACKSON: You said that you started out practicing in the JP courts, so that you wouldn't do much harm. Could you talk about what the procedure was and what the types of cases were that you would have tried in a JP court?

ANDERSON: Oh, somebody wouldn't pay a debt of ninety-seven dollars. This was Depression time. Ninety-seven dollars was worth going to court about. Or, there had been a fender bender. Somebody's car was hurt, seventy-five dollars. You'd go to the JP court and try to get redress for that. JPs also held inquests. You'd

frequently go down to the court to try a case and the judge was out examining a dead body. So you'd have to wait your time. The justices of the peace did not then and perhaps still don't have to have a law degree. Old Judge Ray was, shall I say "over the hill," but his daughter was his clerk and she kept things more or less straight in there. That's about the way I remember it. Usually, I was on the side of the defendant because that's just the way my law firm was and so somebody would sue one of our clients and I would go down and undertake to defend.

JACKSON: That sounds good, why don't we move on to the next floor of the courthouse. This is where the courtrooms were . . .

ANDERSON: I had little to do with the third floor you showed me. I had no occasion to go there except maybe looking for a county commissioner. I'll have to take that back. The county judge was on that floor. At that time he was also the probate judge, I think perhaps the only probate judge in those early days, so he had administrative duties, he also had the duties to hear applications for wills and all matters pertaining to probate. Judge Ward was the county judge when I first started practicing and I remember having a hearing in his office where I had to do a lot of work to prove up a will that had been written for some young man as he departed for the Spanish American War. It had been written in long hand by a scribe and had been signed by two witnesses, a perfectly good will, but I had to find at least two people who could identify every signature so I had to get six people. I never found any one that could identify more than one signature. Big job, for a little guy.

JACKSON: If we continue up the stairs to the next page of the diagrams, now this is the floor you said you used primarily, with the courtrooms?

ANDERSON: Yes, I think this was the 55th District Court with Judge Boyd and I believe this was the 11th District Court for Judge Ashe. I'm pretty sure this was the 61st for Judge Ben Wilson and this would be for Roy Campbell, and I think that was the 80th. I could be wrong; it's been a long, long time.

JACKSON: What type of cases did you try or were you a part of in these courtrooms, in the district courts?

ANDERSON: Two kinds of cases, another thing that young lawyers teethed on were divorce cases for the colored help of their clients or the members of the firm. In those days, divorces were not very easy to obtain, and sometimes, they were contested. So, district judges, we did not have the family judges in those days, district judges heard divorce cases along with all other kinds of cases – land disputes, torts, and the like. So, I've had some of the divorce suits and then we were often defendants, our clients were, in automobile accidents so I had experience doing that. I remember one case in trying to bring some restrictions on a subdivision; rather, I was trying to maintain the restrictions somebody else was breaking. As I say, these were courts of general jurisdiction. I took the kind of cases that were assigned to me by my superiors at the law firm. Did the best I could with them.

JACKSON: Did you have hearings with all four of the judges?

ANDERSON: Oh, I knew them well. I appeared before them with regularity. They could call me by name, even as a cub lawyer, they knew my name and I very sure knew theirs.

JACKSON: Now we move on to the next floor, which is the fifth floor. This was the county law library up here. Did you ever use that, or did your law firm have an adequate law library?

ANDERSON: My law firm had its own library and I had only a few occasions to go into the county law library for books maybe that the firm did not have. So, I had very little experience on that top floor, the fifth floor which I suppose was the top. The stairs didn't go there, as you notice from the plan.

JACKSON: Right, not the rotunda stairs.

ANDERSON: I guess the elevator did, but the stairs did not.

JACKSON: Well, there are stairs, but they're not the rotunda stairs. One of the things that I find interesting in this courthouse and what they considered at the time to be a modern convenience and quite important was the fact that there were jury sleeping quarters in the courthouse.

ANDERSON: I never had anything to do with them and they would only be for criminal court jury, I don't think the juries were ever segregated in a civil case that I heard about. So these rooms probably would not be used for that purpose in the thirties because as I say, the criminal trials were in another building.

JACKSON: Had already moved . . .

ANDERSON: on the other side of town, other side of downtown.

JACKSON: Then, as we go up one more level, then of course we have dome storage space.

ANDERSON: I never made it to that level.

JACKSON: One of the things I would like to talk about with the courthouse, other than lawyers, going in there to do business, is the average citizen in Harris County. How would they have used the courthouse? Why would they have used it?

ANDERSON: To file deeds for record. In those days, they didn't have a modern motor vehicle act and if you sold a car on time there was a note secured by what was called a chattel mortgage on realty. That's not right. There was a note, a chattel mortgage. And that had to be filed for record in the county clerk's office. If you had a dispute with the tax collector, you wanted to pay a tax, you went into the room on the left. There wasn't much reason for ordinary citizens, however, to go above the entry floor. I guess we call it the second floor, the entry floor, whatever it was it had those two offices. There wouldn't be much occasion for anybody but lawyers to go above that.

JACKSON: Or someone involved in a court case?

ANDERSON: Jurors, people like that.

JACKSON: What was the atmosphere of the courthouse? Was it a congenial atmosphere? Was it all very business-like and somber?

ANDERSON: No, it was congenial. Houston had some small town aspects about it at that time. It had got to be where I would know the clerks by name, Miss Collins for example was in the probate department and Miss Katy was Judge Hannay's secretary. We got to know these ladies by name. They were cheerful; there was

nothing somber about it. It was serious, but oh heck, it was kind of like being in the Navy, we knew we were in a serious business, but we weren't heavy-hearted.

JACKSON: I'd like to ask you a couple of questions concerning segregation in the thirties and the county courthouse. Did blacks have the same access to the courthouse that whites had?

ANDERSON: Absolutely.

JACKSON: Did they use the same entrances?

ANDERSON: As far as I know.

JACKSON: There was never a problem with access?

ANDERSON: There was never a problem certainly about getting a deed filed or coming in to pay your taxes. Somebody who tried to pay their taxes was welcome at the office of the tax collector.

JACKSON: And anyone who needed to try a case in the JP courts could . . .

ANDERSON: I don't know that the blacks sat on juries in those days. I don't believe they did. But then, neither did women.

JACKSON: Exactly, women didn't either. The first black grand juror, grand juror, was in the 1940s.

ANDERSON: In what year?

JACKSON: I believe it was 1944, but I can look it up for you. That wasn't a regular trial jury, that was the grand jury. Although they used the same entrances, there were still segregated facilities such as water fountains and bathrooms.

ANDERSON: Oh, I suppose so. I don't remember.

JACKSON: Do you remember if there were any black employees?

ANDERSON: I don't remember.

JACKSON: Definitely not in the clerks or anything like that.

ANDERSON: No not in the clerks, not in the courtrooms. They were definitely not in the courtrooms.

JACKSON: Or as you saw in any of the other county offices.

ANDERSON: Well, they might have been the janitors, I don't know.

JACKSON: The next question I really wanted to ask about was the courthouse square. You know, in a lot of counties, the courthouse square is where all the action takes place. And, I'm not sure that was the case in Harris County. Was that the case, did people "hang-out" at the square?

ANDERSON: There were a few hangers out and in particular along Fannin Street there were some kind of almost homeless people who hoped to be called on a jury. Jury calls go out in a routine manner by mail or by service or what-not in most cases. But sometimes it's necessary to impanel a jury and the jury pool is just not present. So the sheriff goes out on the street and picks up these guys, they call them tails men, and brings them up there usually in JP court and they will hear cases and get paid a dollar or two for their service to the county. I don't think this was a highly educated bunch of jurors but I do remember they hung out down there. Otherwise there wasn't a whole lot of grass around there and not too many trees as you see. There was one tree I think somewhere they said had been a hanging tree, but I doubt it. I doubt if it ever was.

JACKSON: I often think when I look at the pictures of the 1896 jail, that was down on the bayou and there was a huge oak tree and I'm wondering if that is what they

are referring to. Do you remember any events or occasions that happened at the courthouse?

ANDERSON: I may have attended the swearing in of new district judge at some point, but I can't be specific about it.

JACKSON: But nothing comes to mind?

ANDERSON: No.

DAVIS: What about any type of political campaign. Would a governor come and speak from the steps of the courthouse or anything?

ANDERSON: No, not that I remember, not that I heard. It may have gone on, but I wasn't there.

JACKSON: I think one of the biggest events happened when you were out of town, which is when they started to sell beer licenses again in 1932. It was jammed, I read that in the paper, but you weren't here in 1932 to see that. Do you remember any significant court cases or any interesting court cases from the period?

ANDERSON: Well, I guess there were a great number of them. But, my gosh, after all this time, the district courts were courts of general jurisdiction. Anything that involved one million dollars or more was apt to be tried down there. More's the pity, I was not representing any of those rich clients so I was not in there and I don't remember now what the outcome of them was. I do remember a case that Mr. Burns, my associate, tried where a very prominent local citizen was subject of a civil suit to require him to maintain some woman's child born out of wedlock. That was in the papers everyday – everybody knew about that. I was not present for the trial, however.

JACKSON: Would you happen to have any photographs taken inside of the courthouse or know of any?

ANDERSON: No.

JACKSON. It's very interesting that there are so few photographs from inside the Harris County courthouse. Can you think of any thing else concerning the courthouse Al that you would like to ask about specifically? Is there anything you would like to add?

ANDERSON: I didn't go to the courthouse much after it was remodeled. I left the law business in 1947 and became a bank officer at a nearby bank. So I had little occasion to go there. I was generally aware of the remodeling and the Squatty Lyons Tunnel that went over to serve the new building. The new building replaced a hotel that was a flop house. For a long time I remembered the name of it, it was just across, Congress, just north of the courthouse. It was an old hotel with such high ceilings that they floored in between and a five foot man could walk around upright in between the floor and the newly constructed ceiling and a six foot man would have to bend down. Sturgill Hotel, S T U R G I L L Hotel was on the corner of Fannin and Congress. And I'm sure there is a county building there now.

JACKSON: What I would like to move to now is our second county building, which is now called the Anderson Clayton Building. It's owned by Harris County. This was opened in 1924 as the Houston Cotton Exchange Building. Why was it purchased by Anderson Clayton?

ANDERSON: I don't think it was.

JACKSON: Do you know how it got the name of the Anderson Clayton Building?

ANDERSON: Yes, I do.

DAVIS: That came from Ray Miller and the Commissioners Court. That was just the modern designation. They named it because Anderson Clayton was headquartered there, but that's a modern name for the building.

ANDERSON: It was the Cotton Exchange Building for nearly all of its existence until, as Al said, it was renamed and Ray Miller is a real expert on Anderson Clayton and Company. Anderson Clayton and Company was no doubt the largest tenant and in those days. I think that there was a rash of building cotton exchange buildings all through the South. In the early twenties, I lived in Oklahoma City, one was built there. Anderson Clayton moved its office from an upper floor of a printing shop across the street to the new twelve story Cotton Exchange Building which was very nice for that era. The one down in Houston was built around the same time. The local cotton merchants, cotton was a big business, were shall I say, given the opportunity to subscribe to stock in the ownership of the building and the corporation that owned it. Or maybe it was owned by members of that local exchange, there wasn't much reason for local exchanges. The New York Cotton Exchange dominated the cotton picture but there could be a few local trades and I guess they were pretty busy in the thirties in the exchange business, but that tapered off. I don't know how many years it's been since there was an active exchange here, a long time, thirty years or more.

JACKSON: Do you remember much about the building? Did you go there much?

ANDERSON: I was in and out of there all the time. My uncle, M. D. Anderson, was the treasurer of the company, president for awhile. I went up to see him with regularity. He had been named trustee with my father's will, and I was personally very fond of him and looked to him for advice and counsel, almost as a surrogate father. So I went to this office all the time.

JACKSON: Did he use the underground garage?

ANDERSON: I don't think there was one. I think the garage was across the street. Parking was not a problem, you see at the time they built the building. I don't think anybody had an underground garage – in fact there was nothing underground in Houston to speak of, because the water table was so high that the danger of flooding far outweighed the importance of parking underground.

JACKSON: When the building was built, it was designed so there was a garage in the basement. There was a lift, you drove your car onto an elevator and then went down into the garage.

ANDERSON: I never saw it.

JACKSON: I've seen the elevator and I asked and they said they aren't sure that it ever worked well enough to be able to handle the weight of a car.

ANDERSON: My uncle walked across the street to get his car to a little funny garage that's still there on the corner of Austin and Prairie, across the street.

DAVIS: What floor was his office on?

ANDERSON: The eleventh. The company also had either the tenth or the twelfth floor, or both; and then a big piece of the sample room. There was a sample room on top. There still are probably skylights, so the cotton samples could be graded in

that room. They always looked for a north light, did it by daylight, not by artificial light. They wanted north light because it didn't cast any shadows.

JACKSON: Were the businesses in the exchange building purely for the cotton exchange or were there other businesses there too?

ANDERSON: There were other businesses. There was a law firm called Franklin and Blankenbecker. There were shipping companies. There was a company on the ground floor that sold navigational charts. There was a little coffee shop called the Oasis. There was a good sized barber shop on the ground floor. Those were the main things on the ground floor that I remember. The eleventh floor was just offices. There were three elevators, maybe four, with me to operate them. We didn't have the push button elevators until later.

JACKSON: Is there anything else you wanted to ask?

DAVIS: At some point you told me about M. D. Anderson's desk. Who has possession of his desk?

ANDERSON: My brother, Ben, had it for years and kept it in his office in the River Oaks Bank building. But he became almost an invalid, and I was after him to make some disposition of it, perhaps in favor of your organization. And, I couldn't get anything out of him on that. So I kept working, "Why don't you give it to Anderson Hospital?" Nothing came of that. Somebody else must have worked on him, because he gave it then to Texas Medical Center, Inc. and they put it on the end of their directors' room with a little ribbon around it, and that's where it is. It can be seen there today.

DAVIS: Great, I'm glad to hear that.

ANDERSON: Dr. Wainerdi (Richard Wainerdi, PhD) presides over that office which is in the Jesse Jones Library Building in the Medical Center.

JACKSON: We were also wondering about any recollections you may have concerning Will Clayton. What was your relationship with him?

ANDERSON: He was my mother's brother. There were really two Anderson Clayton partnerships. The first one was when my father married my mother, Burdine Clayton. Actually, her name was Desdemona Burdine Clayton, and she hated Desdemona so much, especially after it got to be "Dessie," that when she married that "Dessie" disappeared and the name "Burdine," which was a big Mississippi family, was altered to sound like "Burdene." There have been many granddaughters and cousins and so on have been named for her, nieces and so on. The Claytons, Will Clayton, named his third daughter Burdine, pronounced "Burdene" for my mother.

Of course I remember him from my earliest days in Oklahoma City. As I say, the company, Anderson Clayton started there. M. D. Anderson never did live there. He started in Jackson, Tennessee, and moved to Houston in 1907 or 1908. But, my two Clayton uncles, Will and Ben, lived near us in a nice residential section of Oklahoma City. Nice then, it's now kind of an historic section, like the Houston Heights, something of that kind. Well-maintained, beautiful to go there, especially for me, I enjoy it. It almost broke my young heart when Ben Clayton said he was moving to Houston and Will followed a year later. This left my mother, who had had two brothers within rifle shot, with had no brothers within 500 miles. This was one of things that persuaded her twelve years later that she

needed to move to Houston where in addition to her two brothers, she had one son and a brother-in-law, M. D. Anderson.

Will Clayton was a tall, genial good looking man who really had three careers. He became undoubtedly the world's most important cotton merchant. This led to expertise in commodities. During the war years he ran a subsidiary of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation called the Defense Plant Corporation.

Tape 1, Side B

Will Clayton during the war was given charge of the Defense Plant Corporation, which was in the business of assuring that if we got into the war, we would have enough scarce commodities to see us through. Remember that Britain had been in the European war for more than a year. For example, the United States doesn't produce any tin. That's produced largely in Bolivia. If the Germans got to that place first and cut off our supplies, we wouldn't have any tin. So a tin smelter was built near Texas City, great big thing, you may remember seeing it on the left as you went down towards Galveston. Enough Bolivian tin was then imported to supply our needs and hopefully to deny the needs of Germany. They also built a plant for making magnesium; turned it over to Dow Chemical Company to work, to operate. It was called the Dow Magnesium Company. There were many other such things, antimony and copper and things like that that he managed to hoard. He had a great understanding for the need for those and how to get them: keep

them for our side; deny them to the enemy – that was one of his principle functions.

He stayed in the government, as no doubt you know, and became an Under Secretary of State. There's a book called *Our Finest Hour* that identifies him quite clearly as the author of the Marshall Plan. He made many trips to Europe in 1946 and realized that all the countries of Western Europe were just on their knees. They didn't have any money, the buildings had all been bombed out in the cities, dock facilities were gone, and they needed desperately a lot of help, which is a perfect, fertile ground for the Communists to move into. So we had to beat them to the punch. This was done by what was called the Marshall Plan, whereby billions of dollars of credit were made available to the Western European countries to enable them to rebuild. Will Clayton, certainly in this book and by many others, is regarded as the principle architect of that plan. He was a great man.

JACKSON: Well, I thank you very much for the time you spent with us today.

ANDERSON: It's been a pleasure, I'm afraid I haven't given you as much information as you would like, but it's just because we were talking about events that happened so far back, half a century and more, that they don't come to mind readily. I'll probably think of a half a dozen more before the night is out.

END OF INTERVIEW